

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 153 324

EA 010 505

AUTHOR Dillon, Elizabeth
TITLE A School Board Member's Guide to Staff Development.
INSTITUTION National School Boards Association, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 78
NCTE 39p.
AVAILABLE FROM National School Boards Association, 1055 Jefferson Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007 (\$3.50, quantity discounts; shipping and handling charges will be added to billed orders)
EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Administrative Personnel; Boards of Education; Costs; Elementary Secondary Education; *Inservice Education; *Inservice Programs; *Inservice Teacher Education; Nonprofessional Personnel; Personnel Evaluation; Program Descriptions; *Program Development; *Staff Improvement; Teacher Evaluation

ABSTRACT

For the purposes of this booklet, staff development is defined as "all those learning activities organized, conducted, and funded by the local school district that are designed to improve the on-the-job performance of district employees." Comprehensive school district staff development programs provide activities focusing on curriculum and teaching methods, improvement of the organization, and personal growth and development. Aspects of staff development discussed in this booklet are the elements of a good staff development program, programs in different settings, program costs, and the relationship of such programs to personnel evaluation. Descriptions of six successful programs are included. (Author/IRT)

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A School Board Member's Guide to Staff Development

By Elizabeth Dillon

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Staff Development

is an original manuscript prepared for the National School Boards Association by Elizabeth Dillon.

Price: Single copy, \$3.50. Discounts on quantity orders: 10-49 copies, 10%; 50-99 copies, 15%; 100 or more copies, 20%. Shipping and handling charges will be added to billed orders.

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Foreword

As school districts confront increasing demands with shrinking dollars, it is necessary to consider the importance of an effective staff development program for all school district employees.

The financial pressures on school districts, combined with the declining birth rate, have sharply reduced teacher mobility. As a result, the infusion of innovative ideas and techniques usually associated with new, young teachers is generally over. Staff development remains one of the few ways fresh ideas and enthusiasm can be injected into a potentially stagnant staff.

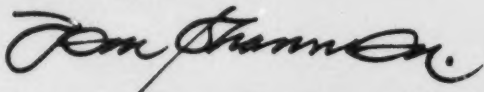
Staff development for teachers insures that new materials are used effectively and that new developments in educational technology are correctly integrated into the curriculum. Office personnel benefit from periodic updating on improved recordkeeping procedures to maintain efficient office operations. Similarly, other school district employees, including food service personnel and custodians, find that staff development activities enable them to perform their jobs more effectively.

Parent and community groups want more input and information concerning what the schools are—or should be—doing. A sensitive response to these demands dictates staff development as part of a good school-community relations program.

But what about the cost of staff development in light of other pressing demands on the education dollar? Remembering that 85% or more of the average district operating budget is spent on staff salaries, school districts can't afford *not* to provide staff development. Staff development designed to maintain or increase the efficiency and effectiveness of teachers, administrators and classified personnel is a kind of insurance on that investment in

salaries. Moreover, it could be the best way to improve the overall responsiveness of the school system to board policy.

We hope this booklet will assist you in reviewing the role of staff development in your school district and provide some ideas for your own staff development efforts.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tom Shannon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and a stylized "S" at the end.

Thomas A. Shannon
Executive Director
National School Boards Association

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What Is Staff Development?

Staff development is a popular idea these days. Employers everywhere are providing continuous "on-the-job training" for employees. But it's not a new idea for schools. "Inservice education" has been a part of education for quite a while. "Staff development" is different from inservice only in that it is more comprehensive.

Almost exclusively for classroom teachers, early inservice activities introduced new curriculum materials—usually a new textbook series. Sessions were short, often requiring only a few hours before the beginning of the new school year.

Today, staff development opportunities are provided routinely by many school districts for all employees—professional (teachers and administrators) and classified (office personnel, bus drivers, food service staff). And, staff development deals not only with curriculum, but with organizational improvements that will enhance the quality of our public education system.

For the purposes of this booklet, staff development is defined as:

All those learning activities organized, conducted and funded by the local school district, which are designed to improve the on-the-job performance of district employees.

Although "staff development" is currently most commonly used to describe these activities, "inservice training," "inservice education," "continuing education" and "professional growth" are also used. Some educators differentiate between their meanings, but in this booklet, the terms are used interchangeably.

Comprehensive school district staff development programs provide activities focusing on curriculum and teaching methods, improvement of the organization, and personal growth and development. Let's look briefly at each.

Curriculum/Methodology Improvement or Change

Most people think of staff development in connection with the introduction of new curriculum to teachers. When new science materials are introduced, for example, teachers usually are expected to attend a training session to become familiar with the content and organization of the new materials. Traditionally, this type of training has been conducted on teacher work days preceding the opening of school and has had little, if any, follow-up.

Even if the introduction of a new curriculum is thorough, it should be only one part of a comprehensive staff development program for teachers. Today, teachers, administrators and board members are increasingly aware that serious attention must be focused continuously on upgrading teaching skills. It can no longer be assumed that teachers have all the skills they will ever need when they are hired. Consequently, time should also be spent on teaching skills. More and more frequently, a new curriculum is packaged with detailed recommendations about how the materials should be taught. Often, the method or process used to present the materials may be as important as the materials themselves—a necessary topic for staff development.

As educational research reveals new information about how students learn, new teaching techniques are being developed to help teachers facilitate learning. This kind of research also provides educators with information to help them determine staff development needs.

For example, there is good evidence that students develop in a predictable sequence of learning readiness levels. At first, they need very concrete experiences—handling, touching, and manipulating the objects being used to teach an idea. From this tactile phase, they pass to a level where a picture can be substituted for an object, and finally to the abstract level where the printed word can be substituted for the object.

Experience shows, however, that most teaching in junior highs and high schools is abstract, despite the fact that many students

are still in the tactile phase of learning readiness. If more administrators and teachers understood this, much classtime would be more profitable for students.

Administrators, especially principals, should take part in staff development focusing on curriculum and the learning/teaching process. To be true educational leaders, they need to understand not only the subject matter taught in their schools, but the teaching methods as well. It is the staff development program that should be responsible for the continuing education of these administrators. Experience shows that principals who understand and participate in staff development gain credibility with staff and parents alike.

Although curriculum/methodology is the concern primarily of teachers and administrators, a comprehensive staff development program also affects aides and paraprofessionals. In many cases, teachers and aides attend some sessions as a team. Occasional "briefings" provide all classified staff members with a general understanding of curriculum changes as well. Programs of this type help fulfill the need for all members in the organization to be informed—at some level—about the work of the organization.

Organizational Improvement or Change

The school district is an organization. It is a public institution, and many diverse groups expect it to perform in certain ways. Board members feel these expectations keenly; they are constantly bombarded with demands for changes—either to move into new methods of operation, or to return to older, "tried and tested" ones.

How the school district responds to these varied expectations as an organization also is the concern of a comprehensive staff development program. Education is a "people business," and changes in the organization do not occur unless there are changes in the people who make up the organization.

Planning and implementing an interpersonal communications program to accompany a desegregation court order is an example of how a staff development program could contribute to an organizational change. In this kind of effort, an organizational goal—the successful integration of students in a nondisruptive manner—must be achieved, while simultaneously meeting the

needs for security, safety, recognition, and respect of the human beings involved. In this instance, it is as crucial for teachers to feel comfortable in the new environment as it is for bus drivers to deal sensitively with a potentially explosive situation. Both groups require training for dealing effectively with the new situation.

Personal Growth

Comprehensive staff development programs should include opportunities for staff members to select activities that will help them increase their knowledge of subject matter, update their teaching method or technical know-how, or challenge their intellectual curiosity and encourage them to be continuous learners.

Making provisions for this kind of individual development is difficult in districts plagued by serious financial problems, because programs may not be considered closely related to actual job assignments. Personal growth opportunities, however, contribute to positive staff attitudes, which, in turn, promote active scholarship and enthusiasm.

Staff Development for Whom?

Historically, inservice efforts have been directed almost exclusively toward classroom teachers. Today, however, most school districts seriously working toward excellence and cost-effectiveness provide staff development for all employees of the school district as well as for school board members.

Administrators participate in sessions on topics such as time management, improved planning processes, supervision and evaluation of instruction, and shared decision-making processes.

Teachers attend sessions related to presenting new curricula, diagnosis and prescription of student learning problems, team planning and teaching, and mainstreaming special education students.

Office staff, aides, food service workers, and custodial personnel spend time in sessions designed to keep them updated on procedures in their assigned areas, and to help them see the significance of their roles in relation to the *total* school district operation. Recognizing that all employees of a district serve a public relations function, whether they realize it or not, staff development sessions for classified personnel may focus on the

communication role all staff members play. Because office personnel and custodians often have extensive contact with parents and students, they can benefit from staff development activities—designed to improve adult-child and school-community relationships—similar to those in which teachers are engaged.

And school board members? They attend state association and the National School Boards Association conventions and workshops on topics such as policy development, board-superintendent relations, trends in education, goal-setting, communication-community relations, and collective bargaining.

For clarity and economy, we use the masculine form of pronouns throughout this booklet when no specific gender is implied. While we recognize the trend away from this practice, we see no graceful alternative, and intend no sexism.

Chapter 2



What Is a Good Staff Development Program?

Like a gourmet chef's recipe, a staff development program is more likely to be successful if certain ingredients are included: program recognition in district policy; capable leadership; and a critical assessment of the participants' human needs.

District Policy

Staff development functions best when it is established by effective district policy. When asked, "How does your school district recognize the status of staff development?" one board member replied, "Well, we must recognize it—we have a line item for it." But, allocation of funds in itself is not sufficient. The policy should be carefully written.

Written policies describe staff development programs in various ways. Some have detailed job descriptions for those responsible for the program, while others simply state that "it is the policy of the district to provide for the continuing inservice needs of its employees." An example of a policy from NSBA's Educational Policies Service (EPS/NSBA) reads:

PROFESSIONAL/SUPPORT STAFF DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

All staff members shall be encouraged and provided with suitable opportunities for the development of increased competencies beyond those which they may attain through the performance of their assigned duties and assistance from supervisors.

Opportunities for professional growth shall be provided through such means as the following:

1. Planned inservice programs and workshops offered within the school system from time to time.
2. Released time for visits to other classrooms and schools and for attendance at conferences, workshops, and other professional meetings.
3. Leaves of absence for advanced educational training.
4. Credit on the salary schedule for additional educational training as approved.

The superintendent shall have the authority to approve released time for conferences and visitations, and reimbursements for expenses, provided such activities are within budget allocations for the purpose.

A segment from a typical job description for a director of staff development might read:

The Director of Staff Development shall provide leadership for a program of activities designed to improve the capability of staff members to perform their assigned tasks.

Specific Duties:

1. To aid in determining the professional growth needs of the staff. To insure that there is a cohesive program of staff retraining to implement curriculum change and to keep professional personnel current with new developments.
2. To organize and administer professional growth opportunities for teachers, including workshops, study groups, cooperative programs with universities, and leadership training seminars for administrative and supervisory roles.
3. To coordinate professional growth activities with teachers, teacher representatives, consultants, principals, and central office administrative personnel.
4. To maintain close relationships with appropriate authorities at various universities and agencies regarding qualified available resource personnel for staffing workshops and seminars.
5. To counsel professional personnel through personal interviews.

6. To plan and direct all intern programs and to maintain adequate supervision of these programs.

7. To be responsible for all the publicity given to the courses offered for professional growth credit and to see that all courses are amply publicized.

Obviously, a detailed job description of this kind is appropriate for a relatively large school district, but the same staff development principles apply to the smallest school districts.

Capable Leadership

Good leadership is a key element in staff development programs since these efforts affect virtually every district activity. Individuals responsible for staff development must combine effective human relations and administrative efficiency to work with personnel at all levels. The staff development coordinator should have solid credibility as a successful educator, preferably at more than one level of teaching and/or administration.

Philosophically, the staff development director must believe that people want to do their jobs better and must be committed to providing a service to help them achieve this goal. This leadership role requires good management techniques to support the self-starters, provide ideas and help to those who have not yet acquired planning skills, and subtly prod those who do not see or acknowledge a need for continuous self-improvement.

In small school districts, staff development responsibilities must, of necessity, be combined with other duties—often those related to curriculum and instruction. If this is the case, staff development may be given credence by including the term in the person's title, e.g., Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Staff Development.

Effective Planning

Often, staff development programs are planned around the time available rather than built upon identified needs. On "staff development days" (in some cases mandated by state law), those responsible for the program—i.e., subject matter consultants, directors of instruction, or principals—typically plan a variety of short, inservice activities from which staff members can choose.

Staff members consistently report that many of these activities are of little value. Many consider them "boring, enforced togetherness" sessions which do more to lower teacher morale than to enhance it. Too infrequent to be of much long-term benefit, many staff development programs tend to introduce briefly a concept with little opportunity for follow-up. And, because they do not represent good planning, they are often unrelated to the daily concerns and needs of the staff.

A good staff development plan includes:

1. Needs Assessment

This can be sophisticated or simple, depending on how long the staff development program has been in existence; who is responsible for it; and how much time, effort, and emphasis are placed on it. Some districts use information such as board goals, achievement test scores, parent opinion, staff surveys, and business community suggestions to determine program improvement needs, basing their staff development plans on the information collected. Others survey only teachers and administrators, asking them what they perceive the district's staff development needs to be, in addition to their personal needs for growth and improvement.

In some cases, needs are identified as the result of externally imposed requirements or pressures. For example, in many school districts, desegregation efforts have necessitated multicultural and human relations training. The current societal pressure to return to the "basics" is another externally imposed pressure that may require a staff development effort.

It is not necessary to have a complex needs assessment process. Almost all school districts are making a serious effort to keep better records and to organize them to facilitate decision-making. As these records become more complete, and as districts gain more skills in interpreting them, areas of strong or weak staff and program performance will be pinpointed and better judgments can be made about how to relate the information to staff development projections.

2. Anticipated Results

When a district has identified a staff development need, those who plan inservice activities should set specific program

objectives, preferably working with a representative group of potential staff development participants. Participants will be more willing to accept the program, and will be better equipped to criticize and evaluate it constructively, if they have been part of the planning process.

An example of "objective-setting": The data collected through achievement test scores indicate that students are not making what the board and the community feel is acceptable progress in spelling. A survey reveals that some teachers have not been adequately prepared to teach spelling. As a result, the director of staff development, the coordinator for language arts, and representative teachers and administrators from each level (primary, intermediate, junior high, senior high) establish the following objectives for a staff development project: Participants will 1) review the rules for teaching spelling and demonstrate that they understand them; 2) learn methods of identifying their students' spelling proficiency; 3) learn how to group students appropriately for spelling instruction and drill; and 4) learn what materials are appropriate for various spelling problems.

Given these objectives, participants are more likely to be receptive to the staff development activity than if they are told to attend "inservice on teaching spelling."

3. Evaluation

The next step is to evaluate the degree to which participants have met the stated objectives. Not all staff development processes are equally easy to evaluate, however, and it is unreasonable to expect all inservice evaluations to yield concrete evidence. Bus drivers may learn new safety procedures at an inservice meeting and immediately apply the knowledge. It is difficult to determine whether or not a teacher is more effective as a result of participation in a course on teacher effectiveness, although the teacher may report a high degree of satisfaction with the experience.

In the absence of a more complex evaluation system, district personnel can survey participants, asking them to describe strengths and weaknesses of the learning experience, ways it was helpful to them, and how the new information will be applied on the job. At the very least, staff development planners—and those responsible for allocating money to it—will learn whether or not the effort was considered valuable and how future programs can

be improved. The evaluation may also identify programs that can be eliminated.

4. Other Considerations

Extensive interviews with staff members at all school district levels reveal that staff development programs with the following characteristics help to create a positive attitude among participants:

- *Meaningful Involvement.* Many times little effort is made to find out whether or not the target audience really needs the training. Even less effort is made to accommodate participants' differing levels of experience, motivation, and training. As one teacher put it: "They just ran us all down the same chute."

Experience shows that when representative staff members are not consulted about the choice of topic or how the activity should be organized, participants are likely to be resistant or even hostile. The more professional training a staff member has, the less likely he is to welcome another's diagnosis and prescription of his needs. Consequently, staff development planners should attempt to actively involve the target audience in planning and evaluating the program.

Another rapidly-growing form of meaningful staff member involvement is the use of superior classroom teachers or classified personnel as leaders for staff development activities. These individuals have a built-in acceptance among their colleagues; they have credibility because of their success at their jobs. Moreover, recognition as an exemplary staff member and program leader increases the individual's sense of self-worth. This approach applies to all districts, particularly smaller ones, since it can reduce the cost of staff development.

- *Practical Learning in a Stimulating Environment.* Adults, like children, learn best in an interesting environment where the pace changes from time to time, where a variety of materials is used, and where they are respected as worthwhile individuals. In addition, in a staff development program, participants must perceive the experience as relevant and useful on the job and must understand the program objectives. Equally important, the program leader must be a good "teacher," with good interpersonal skills, recognized expertise, and the ability to build on the participants' knowledge and experiences.

- *Recognition and Reward.* People respond because they are motivated. In regard to staff development, "motivation" may take the form of required participation or an appeal to the participants' interests. The latter is a more effective long-term motivator, particularly for professional staff. In fact, a survey in one school district revealed that the most powerful staff motivation was the opportunity to learn information or techniques that have the potential to improve job performance.

Advancement on the salary schedule is another powerful incentive. Most school districts provide this incentive by granting salary schedule advances when a given number of college hours have been accumulated. Unfortunately, few offer salary advancement credit for local staff development work, although it may be more job related than college courses.

For many people, recognition such as a record of professional growth efforts—that is periodically reported—is a good motivator. Many school districts require members to demonstrate evidence of professional growth within a certain period of time, but such districts usually provide little direction regarding its nature or quality.

Another powerful—but often unused or misused—motivator is supervision. If a district's philosophy of supervision is growth-oriented rather than punitive, the administrator's task is to assist each staff member in becoming more proficient and satisfied on the job. Teachers repeatedly express the desire for closer supervision, if the intent is to help them increase their skills. Moreover, many teachers report that they are infrequently (if ever) visited by a supervisor in this context. Many school districts now use the "job target" approach to supervision. The staff member sits down with the supervisor, identifies targets for improvement, develops a plan for achieving the targets, and reports regularly on his progress. Although few districts invest the necessary resources to make this process successful, it has excellent staff development potential.

- *On-site Staff Development.* Staff development planners report that professional staff members participate more enthusiastically and perceive their time to be better spent in activities planned for and by individual building staffs to meet the needs of their own student population. The sense of ownership in such a project is much stronger than when staff members come together in a central place from a variety of buildings throughout

the district. Too often the reaction of participants to district-wide efforts is, "Our building problems are more pressing—we need the time to solve them together."

Reviewing Your Program

1. Find out if your district policy makes a firm commitment to staff development.
2. Ask for a review of how staff development activities are currently selected and carried out in your district, and what results are expected.
3. Review the funding to determine if the objectives can reasonably be achieved within the level of current funding.
4. Ask for continuous information from participants to determine the level of satisfaction, identify future needs, encourage continuous program improvement.



Staff Development Programs in Different Settings

Small Districts

The small school district typically finds it fiscally and administratively impractical to have a full-time individual in charge of staff development, so this responsibility ordinarily is combined with other responsibilities. The person selected for this task may be the director of curriculum or instruction, but occasionally he is a principal of one of the smaller schools in the district, a respected department chairman, or a regular classroom teacher.

Frequently, a district-wide committee of teachers and administrators from all levels provides program input and direction. Chaired by the staff development administrator or coordinator, the committee meets at regular intervals to review the progress of the current program and to plan future activities.

Resources are limited by the size of the district and the amount of outside funding available (such as that from federal projects). As a result, many small school districts rely heavily on resources from institutions of higher education (by requesting workshops or off-campus courses), from the state department of education, or from intermediate service units. In many states, the latter two organizations are responsive to requests from small districts, and many will tailor-make a staff development activity to meet the needs of the local school district or building.

In a limited number of cases, small school districts in the same area have formed a cooperative or consortium to identify common needs and share resources. In one instance, a number of smaller districts formed a consortium with one of the state's largest districts and were able to enlist specially trained staff

members from the larger district to act as consultants to the smaller units at a very low cost. Very small districts still rely somewhat on the office of the county superintendent to provide staff development activities.

Ordinarily, few line items in the small district budget are earmarked for staff development, but funds are normally available for curriculum workshops, resource people, and professional travel—usually for administrators.

Many small school districts use their own staff members as resources. Some provide for teacher exchanges, while others authorize staff to observe their counterparts both within and outside the district. Small districts often call on teachers to review and develop curricula, and they also provide a variety of short sessions for classified personnel to learn new techniques or how to operate new equipment.

Large Districts

The large district program typically is headed by a director of staff development who is responsible for coordinating and administering the program. Frequently, the director is responsible for the inservice activities of classified personnel, as well as those of professional personnel.

Access to some discretionary money is very important to the success of a program. Most staff development directors in medium to large school districts control or have access to funds earmarked specifically for staff development. Unfortunately, in districts where there is substantial federal funding, the director of staff development may have little input regarding the expenditure of staff development funds, or the planning and execution of related staff development activities. Often, communication between the activities and the staff development office is insufficient to insure adequate sharing of information or to prevent overlap.

Staff development offices typically consist of one or two people in addition to the director. However, since nearly all large districts maintain a sizable cadre of curriculum specialists, who spend a considerable amount of their time in staff development, the number of resource people available to the staff development program can be substantial. Increasingly, part of the staff development activities are decentralized to the building level and the duties of the director become more diversified as he coordi-

nates district-level projects and works with building principals and their staffs.

Outside resources used in staff development activities in large districts include college faculty members, staff members of intermediate service units, and a wide variety of outside consultants, some from private industry. Large systems are beginning to rely heavily on their own district personnel for staff development. Highly successful teachers are asked to demonstrate their expertise for their colleagues, or to lead workshops (for which they have received special training). This is done not so much to save money (teachers usually are paid a modest hourly stipend for providing this service), but rather to recognize quality staff who have a high degree of credibility with their peers. Outside experts may also be brought in to work on teams with staff to provide a more objective perspective and to infuse new ideas.

In most large school districts, participants in inservice activities are formally recognized for their efforts. Such recognition may be in the form of staff development "points" and/or advancement on the salary schedule. In many districts, staff members are paid a small hourly amount for participating in staff development activities occurring outside the school day or year. In a growing number of cases, teacher unions oppose staff development activities for which no monetary remuneration is provided.

Until recently, staff development programs were evaluated by asking participants to critique the activities. It now is becoming more common to evaluate the success of a staff development program in terms of its stated objectives. Follow-up evaluations also are used to determine the extent to which new techniques have been put into practice. Occasionally, a district's research and development division is commissioned to do a relatively sophisticated analysis of a staff development program to determine its long-range effects.

Individual Building, Department, or Team

Focusing staff development efforts on individual buildings, departments, or teams—and away from a district's central office—is a recent but widespread trend in staff development planning.

If a staff development program is building-wide, the principal usually takes the initiative, but staff members other than administrators also may be selected to organize building-wide staff de-

velopment programs. Usually, they are granted some released time to work or plan with other staff members.

Some schools have representative staff development committees which meet with the principal to identify needs, plan activities, and acquire funds (usually through request to the central office). In some instances, a group of teachers within a building will even organize and carry out a staff development program on their own initiative, without the assistance of an administrator.

Building-wide staff development programs have the advantage of providing commonly understood and established goals. Communication is enhanced, and there is a certain amount of peer pressure to participate. However, peer pressure can work against staff development efforts. In a large building with many employees, it is difficult to reach a consensus and maintain enthusiasm for a single project involving the total staff.

Department or team staff development projects are relatively rare, but where they exist, the department chairman or team leader almost always assumes responsibility for organizing and managing the effort. This responsibility includes planning, conducting, and evaluating the effort under the overall direction of the building administrator.

Well-designed department or team activities usually are acceptable to the participants because they focus on practical, day-to-day problems. The programs often are short and require little outside funding. Every school district, regardless of size, has this resource at its disposal.

Intermediate Service Unit

More and more states have some form of intermediate service unit serving all school districts (and often individual schools) within a jurisdiction. These units usually have considerable flexibility in responding to the needs of their member schools. In some cases, staff members of the unit are available to have conferences with anyone requesting help.

Nearly all intermediate service units have substantial resources (human, economic, and curricular) to support requests of local school districts. Sometimes intermediate service unit staff members survey the area and provide staff development services based on high priority needs of the region. They frequently use a representative area-wide council as a planning group.



Determining Costs for Staff Development

Determining how much staff development actually costs in a school district isn't a simple task. Budget line items specified for staff development are misleading because they give a very limited picture. Typically, they include only salaries of personnel assigned to staff development responsibilities, funds assigned to that office for workshops, courses, and speakers; travel funds for professional staff; and curriculum workshops, which keep staff up-to-date regarding the selection or development of new teaching materials.

A 1977 study for the Ford Foundation* of one school district revealed that total school staff development activities in any school district may be much more extensive than they appear to be from the above limited list. It found that board members tend to think of the visible district-wide activities as the "staff development program"; "inservice days" on the calendar (the most obvious to them, the public, and even the staff) are considered the major inservice time expended. They seldom take into account other inservice activities such as:

1. A specialist from the Program Development Division helps local school staff plan a physical education program to meet federal regulations on sex discrimination.

* Acknowledgment is made to the Ford Foundation and Program Officer Marjorie Martus for information which comes from a Ford Study of Staff Development conducted in 1976-77.

A report based on an analysis of costs in three school districts—by Donald R. Moore, Robert S. Shirley, and Nancy M. Hardison, Center for New Schools, Chicago, IL—will be available from the Ford Foundation in 1978.

2. An English department chairman provides on-the-job advice to teachers in the classroom.

3. A psychologist conducts a series of workshops to train teachers in group process techniques they can use in disciplinary conflicts with students.

4. A teachers' center focusing on elementary mathematics offers minicourses on subjects identified by teachers.

5. Under the principal's leadership, teachers observe each other in the classroom and meet to analyze strengths and weaknesses.

6. Outside consultants introduce an approach to remedial reading by first teaching the program in the school district with teachers observing and then helping the teachers carry out the new program themselves.

7. Teachers go on a weekend retreat to analyze racial problems in their school and then carry out plans to improve the racial climate.

8. Reading specialists make regular visits to assigned schools to assist teachers through direct on-the-job advice in the classroom.

9. Psychologists from the Student Support Services office hold regular sessions with staff of local schools to improve their communication skills.

10. The principals set up monthly teachers' meetings so that outside speakers can address the faculty on topics the principal has identified as important.

11. The principal schedules teacher preparation periods so that teachers on a team can meet with specialists for workshops.

12. The department head carries out a mandated yearly review of teacher performance through a classroom visit and subsequent discussion with each teacher.

13. The principal releases a teacher to visit an experimental school and assigns the assistant principal to cover the teacher's classroom.

Obviously, the time costs for these projects are sizable. However, because they relate to other primary assignments—that appear elsewhere in the budget—these projects are not charged to staff development.

It might appear, then, that every school district is investing heavily in staff development. But, in terms of focused, readily

identifiable program improvement, this investment is minimal at best. Moreover, this fragmentation may prevent adequate expenditures to launch a more comprehensive, clearly defined staff development program.

Although education cannot be compared directly to private business or industry, it is sometimes useful to draw parallels. While there is no physical product involved in the educational process, results are expected. Many criticisms leveled at schools represent direct or indirect references to the imperfections or inadequacies of the product. One of the best ways to improve student performance is to improve the skills of those who work with them.

When product improvement costs in industry are compared to similar costs in education, there is great disparity. A successful business in the United States may spend ten percent of its annual gross on product improvement. Very few school districts earmark as much as one one-hundredth of that amount specifically for staff development, which is solely designed to improve job performance.

The staff development budget of one school district that makes a substantial investment in a program beyond that paid for by additional academic increments (.2% annually), shows the following breakdown:

Administrative Costs (6%)

- Salary—director or coordinator
- clerical

District-Wide Projects (30%)

- Salary—stipends for participants (time spent outside regular school day, week/year)
- stipends for local school district leaders
- substitutes for released time for participants/leaders

Supplies

Professional Travel (administrators and teachers designated by central office)

Contracted Services (consultants, resource persons outside district)

Building-Based Projects (30%)

Salary—stipends for participants (time spent outside regular school day, week/year)

—stipends for local school district leaders

—substitutes for released time for participants/leaders

Supplies

Professional Travel (building administrators and teachers)

Contracted Services (consultants, resource persons outside district)

Special Projects (34%)

(Example: 3-year individualized staff development program for junior high teachers focused on academic and social developmental levels of junior high students)

Salary—coordinator

—building facilitators

—substitutes to provide released time for participants

Supplies

Professional Travel

Contracted Services

Little information is available concerning the amount of money districts actually spend per student—or per teacher—on staff development. This is partly because it is difficult to pinpoint the precise activities that fall into this category. Some states provide a fixed sum for staff development. In other states, local school districts receive state funds when they file a staff development plan.

School board members considering whether or not their present budget allocations are adequate or properly administered may wish to keep in mind the following:

- When making up the budget, it may be wise to pull out and total the funds currently being spent for staff development but not labeled as such. This may help board members to better evaluate the adequacy of the staff development budget.

- Central staff development offices should provide a clearinghouse mechanism for staff development. This mechanism

can eliminate conflicting, competitive, or duplicate staff development activities being carried out by different parts of the organization, communicate a general sense of effectiveness about the program, and allow more cost effective use of funds.

- The largest current single investment in staff development in any school district is nearly always the continuous payment for additional college work, over which local boards or administrations exercise little control.

This is not to say that even if all staff development expenditures were recognized, properly organized, and tied to expectations for improved performance, that current levels of staff development funding would be adequate to improve instruction markedly. It is clear, however, that districts must become more proficient in identifying needs, stating outcomes, and estimating costs so that the board members can make informed, budgetary decisions.



Staff Development/Personnel Evaluation

Staff development and personnel evaluation are two parts of a total process designed to improve the job performance of public school employees. Evaluation assesses how well the employee is doing the job and identifies areas where improvement is desirable.

Many school districts use the "job target" or "management by objectives" approach to evaluation. In this form of evaluation, the individual being evaluated and his supervisor meet and determine areas where improvement is needed or desirable. Together, they establish tasks for the staff member to accomplish during the evaluation period, and the criteria by which success or failure will be measured. A commitment to participate in appropriate staff development activities is often part of the improvement plan agreed to by the supervisor and the employee.

For example, if the teacher and the principal agree that the teacher should improve classroom discipline, they may decide that the teacher should participate in the district's staff development sessions on Glasser's "Ten Steps to Discipline." The teacher will be expected to apply what he learns, and the principal will visit his classes to observe whether or not discipline has improved.

In this situation, the evaluation process is helpful to the teacher, and the staff development meets an individual need. The teacher is likely to have a positive attitude toward both the evaluation process and the total staff development program because they enable him to increase his professional skills and his self-confidence.

Unfortunately, many people are apprehensive about evaluation. Frequently, staff fear that evaluation will threaten their job security by identifying inadequacies. With these perceptions, staff are unlikely to believe that evaluation and related staff development activities can be constructive.

To be effective, both evaluation and staff development require a climate of trust. The supervisor must believe that the staff member wants to do a better job, and that it is his job to help the employee meet this objective. Likewise, the staff member must be willing not only to identify areas where improvement is possible, but to make and carry out a plan for self-improvement.

In too many school districts, little time is spent in staff evaluation. Classified personnel usually are better supervised than professionals. Typically, a teacher is evaluated on the basis of an annual ten-minute class visit by the principal, and administrators receive little or no formal training in supervision methods or evaluation procedures.

Well-organized, one-to-one staff development—when practiced consistently—can produce positive results. Interviews with employees reveal that supervision is welcomed if it is proficient and designed to increase employee competence.

Sometimes an employee cannot, or will not, do an adequate job, and termination is the only alternative. When this happens, the district is in a much stronger position if it can show that an honest attempt was made to help the staff member be successful.

The evaluation-staff development process is most effective when:

1. It is a written, district policy.
2. All employees are acquainted with the positive intent of the evaluation program and its relationship to inservice training, and are involved in its development to the extent possible.
3. Supervisors receive training in good evaluation techniques.
4. All employees (including administrators) are evaluated.



Some Staff Development Ideas That Work

Des Moines Public Schools Des Moines, Iowa

"Teachers have feelings too . . . but that's a fact that sometimes teachers themselves deny, administrators overlook, parents forget, and students don't believe." This statement appears in material accompanying an effective staff development program titled, "The Heart of Teaching." It centers around a series of 15-minute videotaped programs on affective concerns that teachers themselves have identified as most troublesome. The programs include:

The Parent Crunch (Communication)

This program highlights one of the most common stress-producing events in the lives of teachers—the encounter with an angry parent.

Last Hour Clash (Frustration)

Whit Jefferson can't understand why Sidney constantly disrupts his class, and Sidney can't understand why the teacher always picks on him. This program caricatures the frustrations teachers feel when nothing they do seems to reach certain students; it also suggests ways to deal with those frustrations.

An Eye for Change (Professional Growth)

Teachers often are asked to change the "what and how" of their teaching. Which changes are reasonable and appropriate and which are not? This is a question Trudy Bowman must deal with now that her principal has instituted a project for professional development. This program focuses on the mixed feelings,

worries, and personal risks involved in a teacher's professional growth.

Every One Is Something Else (Individual Differences)

Fifty individual students and an infinite number of individual differences—cultural, racial, intellectual, creative—make up Lynn's elementary class. The program points out the things a teacher must keep in mind, simultaneously, if she is to be helpful to all student needs and backgrounds.

Although teachers can watch the programs alone, Des Moines staff members have found them most useful in a discussion/workshop setting with discussion leaders. The results expected from the workshops are "heightened satisfaction with one's self, with one's colleagues, and with one's students."

A participant's typical response was, "I, for one, came with the attitude, 'Show me, I'm too busy to be here. It had better be good; the kids at my school need me more than this workshop can ever help me.' My attitude soon changed to, 'It's not possible I was lucky enough to be selected.' "

Madison Metropolitan School District Madison, Wisconsin

Based on the assumption that everyone has a practical idea that can help someone else, the Madison Exchange facilitates continuing professional growth of teachers and administrators. The Exchange:

- provides a place for teachers and administrators (individually or in groups) to learn (formally or informally) and help others do the same;
- acts as a clearinghouse of educational information;
- organizes professional growth activities and groups in accordance with local needs and interests.

The core of the Madison Exchange is more than 100 inservice activities—courses, sharing sessions, workshops, and seminars—scheduled after school, evenings, weekends, and in the summer. Each activity is the result of a suggestion made by a local teacher or administrator, and more than half of the sessions

have been led by local classroom teachers who use them to acquaint others with one or more of their own successful teaching practices. Program activities cover all curricular areas and all grade levels, including titles like, "Mainstreaming the Exceptional Child," "Shoebox Activities," "Mythology in Madison," "Basic Gymnastic Skills," "Inflation," "Concrete Poetry," and "Why Study History?"

Although no formal arrangements exist between the Exchange and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, university personnel frequently are employed by The Exchange to conduct courses or workshops.

Participation in sessions is always voluntary. Most activities carry "professional advancement credit," which can be used by teachers for advancement on the salary schedule. Session leaders are paid for their in-session time, and credit-carrying sessions require participants to pay a fee. Fee revenues cover approximately 75% of costs for materials and leader salaries.

An important source of ideas and leaders for The Exchange is an annual summer project known as "Prepare-to-Share," in which teachers prepare an Exchange inservice session dealing with a classroom idea they wish to present to other teachers during the following school year.

These teacher-designed-and-led inservice experiences are extremely popular because they deal with ideas that participants can "use in my classroom tomorrow"; provide leaders with credibility among their colleagues; encourage interaction among participants and presenters that tends to be more open than in sessions between teachers and outside consultants or administrators; and enable teachers who lead inservice sessions to learn from the participants.

Lincoln Public Schools Lincoln, Nebraska

The Lincoln Public School District, in cooperation with a local community college, provides a wide variety of voluntary and mandatory staff development activities for its food service personnel.

In addition to the courses required for state department of education certification, food service managers and assistant managers must participate in an annual staff development workshop.

The topic for the workshop is predetermined by the district, with recent programs focusing on goal setting and evaluation; communication within the school and within the community; review of recordkeeping procedures; energy conservation; and labor sampling.

A workshop on sanitation and safety is required of all new employees; "old" employees must take a refresher course every four years. Food service personnel—other than managers and assistant managers—are eligible for district certification if they complete numerous courses ranging from an introduction to food service to human relations and techniques of supervision.

The school district covers all tuition costs for the courses and workshops. Employees participating in staff development programs also are paid for any overtime they incur in connection with these activities.

Mesa Public Schools Mesa, Arizona

Effective orientation of new teachers, and selection and training for potential administrators, are significant parts of the Mesa staff development program.

Through its staff development department, the district has established a professional growth program that can result in tenure at the end of three years for new teachers who demonstrate competency in a number of specified areas. Tests have been designed to evaluate levels of teacher proficiency.

When hired, a new teacher takes a skill level competency test. If he fails, his immediate supervisor (usually the principal) evaluates him in the classroom to determine whether he can demonstrate the skill.

The staff development department is responsible for conducting systematic, continuous training activities to help each teacher master competencies that he may not yet have successfully demonstrated.

Mesa also provides a training program for potential administrators. A number of screenings precede selection of administrators. Candidates—recommended by their immediate supervisors according to specific criteria—are given a set of questions for anonymous written response. A structured interview is conducted with each candidate, focusing on his major areas of suc-

cessful administration. Trainees selected by this process serve as interns, in addition to attending administrative training sessions throughout the school year. They also participate in sessions on policies and procedures of the Mesa schools, human relations, and communication.

Tulsa Public Schools Tulsa, Oklahoma

SHARE (Seminar Hour for Administrative Renewal and Exchange)

Administrators, mainly principals, meet every two weeks to discuss topics that have been identified by a district-wide needs assessment. The meetings—which begin after work—extend through the dinner hour. Meeting announcements are printed on brown bags in which staff then bring their suppers. Depending on the topic, the discussion leader may be someone from within or outside the district. Topics have included teacher evaluation, due process for teachers, planning for declining enrollment, and writing personal staff development job targets.

Participation in these inexpensive sessions is voluntary. Participants receive no special recognition for attending, but 35-50 administrators from all administrative staff of 250 regularly attend the sessions. The makeup of the group changes from meeting to meeting, depending on the discussion topic.

Worcester Public Schools Worcester, Massachusetts

The Office of Special Programs of the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts and the Office of Staff Development of the Worcester Public Schools have established a collaborative staff development model, which they call a "Mini-Sabbatical" program.

The program allows short periods of released time for teachers so they can participate in individualized staff development activities. The goals of the program are to provide:

- a long-range cooperative staff development program between a university and a school system;
- an opportunity for classroom teachers to help design their own inservice programs;

- provisions for teachers to assess their roles and evaluate their effectiveness;
- an opportunity for teachers to become familiar with the latest research in education;
- a new model for an urban teacher education intern program;
- a systematic method of involving staffs of schools in a renewal program;
- opportunity for university professors to interact with active teachers;
- visits to model schools and classrooms;
- principal, parent, paraprofessional, and teacher involvement in planning programs for their schools;
- cooperative efforts among elementary, secondary, and university faculties;
- methods of recognizing and dealing with racism in schools;
- workshops dealing with latest techniques and materials; and
- a program designed to link preservice and inservice models of teacher education.

Selected K-12 teachers are freed of classroom responsibility for two one-week inservice training cycles at four-week intervals at a campus of the University of Massachusetts. During these sessions (conducted by the faculty of the university's School of Education) teachers engage in workshops and seminars concerned with the latest research, methods, and materials, while sharing their own successful techniques and programs.

Topics include change strategies for urban schools, utilization of videotapes in a school setting, development of self-concept and school achievement, survival strategies for urban schools, racism, alternatives in education, the integrated day, mathematics workshops, reading, continuous progress, testing, current trends and research in elementary science, and career education.

To insure the success of the program, a preliminary "Mini-Sabbatical" cycle is conducted for principals of all teachers involved. Other administrators, paraprofessionals, parents, and members of the teachers' association are informed about the program.

Much emphasis is placed on intra- and interschool visits. Elementary teachers visit the secondary schools into which their students feed, and secondary teachers visit elementary schools from which their students come. Central administrators from the Worcester Public Schools participate in a final session on future programs and priorities of the school system. This meeting also gives participants an opportunity to provide feedback to the central administration about the effectiveness of the program.

This particular program has several advantages. It provides for collaboration between a public school system and an institution of higher education, and has the potential for upgrading both. It also enables teachers to work in brief—but uninterrupted—blocks of time on professional growth activities without day-to-day classroom responsibilities. And, it underscores the importance of continuous professional development for teachers and administrators.

Acknowledgments

The author is indebted to the following people who were helpful in the development of this booklet: Lincoln (NE) School Board members Pearl Goldenstein, Lu Pansing, Lou Roper, Stan Linnertz, Milan Wall, and (former Lincoln Board member) Nebraska State Senator JoAnn Maxey; Lincoln Superintendent of Schools John Prasch; Dr. John Rornisher, administrative assistant, Business Affairs, Lincoln (NE) Public Schools; staff development colleagues Frank L. Hildreth (retired), Des Moines (IA) Public Schools; Dr. Carolyn Raymond, director of staff development, Mesa (AZ) Public Schools; Dr. John Dewell, director of staff development, Tulsa (OK) Public Schools; Dr. John Durkin, director of staff development, Worcester (MA) Public Schools; Jerre Sigvoldson, elementary principal, Grand Island (NE) Public Schools; Dr. Fred Bellum, superintendent, Columbus (NE) Public Schools; Tom Swenson, inservice coordinator, Madison (WI) Metropolitan School District; and particularly Williamette Shafer, current Lincoln (NE) School Board member, who did preliminary editing from the perspectives of board member and former journalism teacher.

Special recognition is also given to Dorothy Gatto, the author's super-efficient secretary, who has been so valuable in helping the Lincoln Staff Development Program grow from a fledgling unit to one that has many elements of a mature, quality program.